
LESSON 2

MEF COMMAND ELEMENT

For every objective seek unity of command and unity of effort.

-- Carl von Clausewitz

It is not a question of one general being better than another, but of one general being better than two.

-- Lloyd George

It is not so much the mode of information as the proper combined use of the different arms which will ensure victory.

-- Jomini

Introduction

Purpose

This lesson

- Provides an understanding of the MEF's Command Element (CE)
 - Emphasizes the organization's structure for tactical and operational planning
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Why Study MEF CE?

The MEF is the Marine Corps' primary warfighting organization for responding to a significant crisis or major regional contingency.

The MEF CE contains a command and control (C²) architecture for effective planning and execution of operations. Over the past several years, there has been a fundamental shift in the manner in which MAGTF operations are planned and conducted. The central theme characterizing this shift is the **primacy** of MEF. Therefore, understanding the role of the MEF CE is even more critical.

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Introduction, Continued

MEF Control Employment of the MEF's combined arms team in fighting the single battle (deep, close, rear) is the sole responsibility of the MEF commander. The MEF CE, by organization and capability, is the only element with the inherent assets and ability to plan for C² during the single battle.

Therein resides the command, control, communications, and authority to coordinate operations laterally among major subordinate components and to integrate the MEF operations vertically into the joint and multinational campaign plan.

Relationship to Other Instruction *Operational Level of War* (8803) lessons and case studies stressed the importance of the command relationship existing between forces in winning wars. Central to the major subordinate command's warfighting doctrine of maneuver warfare is mutual trust and confidence in the relationship between the MEF commander and the Military Sealift Command. A well-organized and combat-capable CE is essential for ensuring MEF is truly a warfighter.

Future lessons will focus on the major subordinate commands of the MEF and their relationship to the MEF CE.

Study Time This lesson, including the issues for consideration, will require about 2.5 hours of study.

Educational Objectives

Basic Structure, Capabilities, and Limitations	Understand the basic structure, capabilities, and limitations of MEF CE in joint and multinational operations. [JPME 1(a)]
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MEF CE's Role in Key Concepts	Explain MEF CE's role in synchronizing MAGTF single battle concept, integrating MAGTF's battlespace functions, and conducting top-down staff planning. [JPME 2(b) and 3(b)]
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Joint and Multinational Operations	Understand possible MEF CE roles in joint and multinational operations. [JPME 1(b)]
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JPME Areas/ Objectives/Hours (accounting data)	1/a/.5 1/b/.5 2/b/.5 3/b/.5
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Discussion

MAGTF

As previously explained, the MAGTF is a task-organized command consisting of the following elements under one commander:

- Command Element (CE)
 - Ground Combat Element (GCE)
 - Aviation Combat Element (ACE)
 - Combat Service Support Element (CSSE)
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MAGTF Missions

MAGTFs are organized to conduct missions across the entire spectrum of military operations from humanitarian relief operations to sustained high intensity combat. MAGTFs are balanced, flexible, responsive, self-sustaining, and creditable forces. These forces fulfill all three components of the National Military Strategy:

- Peacetime engagement
- Deterrence
- Conflict prevention

Beyond their peacetime missions, MAGTFs are organized to fight and win the nation's battles. Operating forward with naval forces, MAGTFs are powerful national assets designed to support the strategic concepts of overseas presence and power projection.

MAGTF Types

As a frame of reference for sizing and capability, MAGTFs are categorized into the following four types:

- Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF)
 - Marine Expeditionary Force Forward (MEF Fwd)
 - Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)
 - Special Purpose/MAGTF (SPMAGTF)
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Discussion, Continued

Understanding MAGTF's CE	<p>The CE provides command, control, and coordination capability essential for effective planning and execution of operations. It's important to understand the MAGTF's CE for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every MAGTF has a CE that serves as permanent headquarters for the GCE, ACE, and CSSE. The CE contains a C² architecture for effective planning and execution of operations.• The MAGTF CE provides unity of command and ensures the complex mix of assets are effectively employed in a coordinated fashion.• Since the MAGTF CE assumes a number of important roles, including the overall C² of the MEF, the major subordinate commands (GCE, ACE, and CSSE) can concentrate on their areas of responsibility.
CE Structure	<p>The CE structure, serving as support for personnel and facilities, consists of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commander• General or executive officer• Special staff sections• Headquarters section• Requisite communications
MEF's Key Concepts	<p>The key concepts of the MEF's primacy are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single battle concept focuses on deep, close, and rear operations under the C² of the MEF commander• Integrated planning of battlespace functions (BSFs)• Top-down planning based upon the maneuver warfare tenets of centralized planning and decentralized execution <p>These three overriding concepts prevent the MEF from focusing exclusively on GCE operations oriented on the close battle. The focus will be on the <u>single battle concept</u> and centralized, <u>integrated planning</u> (by BSFs) with decentralized execution from the <u>top-down planning</u> based on the commander's battlespace visualization (CBV).</p>

Discussion, Continued

Components of MEF CE The CE is the Marine Corps' mechanism for synchronizing the MEF's major subordinate commands into a coordinated team to maximize its combat power. The major subordinate commands consist of the following:

- Commander
- Deputy commander
- Surveillance Reconnaissance Intelligence Group (SRIG)
- MEF staff

CE Organization The MEF CE structure is designed to provide the commander with the C² infrastructure needed for integrated staff planning and to synchronize MEF assets and BSFs into a single battle concept. The organization structure is listed below:

- Headquarters Company
- SRIG
- Communications Battalion
- Radio Battalion
- Air/Naval Gunfire Liaison Company
- Force Reconnaissance Company
- Topographic Platoon
- Intelligence Company
- Sensor Control and Management Platoon
- Interrogator/Translator Platoon
- Force Imagery Interpretation Unit
- Surveillance and Reconnaissance Center
- MAGTF All-Source Fusion Center
- Naval Construction Force Element (as required)

Discussion, Continued

CE Warfighting Focus

The CE's warfighting focus includes

- Maneuver warfare
 - Unity of effort
 - Top-down planning
 - Synchronization of MAGTF resources
 - Disseminating intelligence
 - Critical information flow
 - Dynamic C²
 - Recognizing what needs to be accomplished
 - Taking appropriate action
 - Allocating resources
 - Timely decision making
 - Maintaining the initiative
 - Decentralized execution
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Fundamentals of MEF Operations

Read and study the following relationships and how they relate to MEF operations:

- The warfighters (operational level)
- Joint Force (numbered air forces, army corps, numbered fleets, MEFs)
- The service components
- Joint Force (Air Force forces, Army forces, Navy forces, Marine forces)
 - Service components recommend proper employment, selection/nomination for assignment to other subforces, and are responsible to the Joint Force Commander (JFC) for managing
 - Assigned operational missions
 - Service intelligence
 - Logistic functions
 - Personnel
 - Administration
 - Discipline
- The functional components
- JFC (JF Air Component Commander, JF Maritime Component Commander, JF Special Operations Commander)

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Discussion, Continued

Joint and Multinational Operations

In a joint or multinational operation, the MEF commander may be designated as a functional commander, service commander, or both. When this occurs, the MEF commander deals directly with the JFC in matters affecting all assigned Marine forces. Since the Marine forces are among the first conventional forces to arrive in an austere theater or area of operations during expeditionary operation, the MEF commander can be designated as the Joint Force Land Component Commander, the Joint Force Air Component Commander, or the Joint Force Maritime Component Commander.

In your readings, further study who the MEF commander deals with in a joint effort, when the MEF commander may be designated as the Joint Commander, and what role the MEF plays as the theater matures.

Required Readings

MCWP 5-1, *Operational Planning*

MCWP 5-1, *Marine Corps Planning* (draft), pp. 1-5 to 1-7 and A-4 to A-9.

- Pages 1-5 to 1-7 offer a good foundation on how the three tenets (top-down planning, single battle concept, and integrated battlespace functions) guide the commander on using his staff for planning and executing military operations.
 - Pages A-4 to A-9 offer a good understanding of the Marine Corps' planning process. This section provides an understanding of the structure and functional areas of duties and responsibilities that are expected from an organized MEF staff to establish current and future operations and plans.
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Joint Pub Readings

Joint Pub 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, "Doctrine and Policy for Joint Commands," chapter IV, pp. IV-10 to IV-19. Find this reading in the *Joint Pub Readings* Vol. I (8800), pp. 204 to 213. This chapter gives you a broad picture of the structure, functions, and basic doctrine of a commander, components, and staff of a joint force. It includes the service component commands and functional component commands, and it gives you a better understanding of how joint task force organizational options are established.

For Further Study

Supplemental Reading

The reading listed is **not** required. It is provided as a recommended source of additional information on lesson topics that may interest you. It will increase your knowledge and augment your understanding of this lesson.

Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*.

Issues for Consideration

What, How, and Purpose of the MEF CE	What is the MEF CE? How is it organized? What is its purpose? Compare and contrast its capabilities and limitations.
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MEF CBV	How does the MEF commander see and shape battlespace?
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Joint and Multinational Operations	Describe the MEF CE's relationship to higher and adjacent commands in joint and multinational operations.
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